

# student review

november 7, 1997

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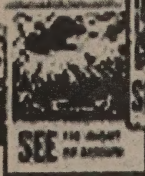
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# Letters to the editor

Dear *Student Review*:

Thank you for your memo clarifying the purpose and mission of *Student Review*. This information will be helpful as we pursue our independent and separate missions.

I was particularly interested in your statement, "We have written this memo at the request of Vice President of Student Life, Alton Wade. Although we have complied in this matter, we have no intention of bending to administrative pressure to change *Student Review* policy or to dilute articles contained therein." To my knowledge and certainly during the past four years, no member of the BYU administration has ever put pressure on *Student Review* to "change policy or dilute articles." On the other hand, twice in the last four years, editors of the *Student Review* have initiated meetings with me, wanting to know what they could do to change the negative reputation of *Student Review* in the eyes of the administration. In both of those instances the editors wanted to become more closely associated with and recognized by BYU. One of those meetings resulted in a letter, a copy of which I gave you a few weeks ago, that expresses the official position of the university.

It appears to me if *Student Review* can give a general impression to the public that BYU administration is attempting to censor, change, or dilute the contents of your paper, it puts you in a stronger position in the eyes of your clientele. However, for you to create that impression would be a serious misrepresentation of the facts on your part. I trust your integrity is stronger than that.

Thanks again for your letter. I have shared it with the President's Council.

Have a good year.

Alton Wade

Dear *Student Review*,

I would like to thank *Student Review* and Dave Barber for the thoughtful interview with Gail Houston. Many BYU students, myself included, never got the chance to get to know Professor Houston before she was dismissed and we appreciate this opportunity to learn about her and what made her one of the most popular teachers in the English department. What has really disturbed me about Sister Houston's firing is what it says about the fear we've developed as a church in talking about our Mother in Heaven. Gail Houston was fired for openly talking about not praying to, as BYU administrators would have us believe Heavenly Mother, and it worries me that she was fired

for this. What I love most about being LDS are the peculiar, strange, and wonderful beliefs that we hold as Mormons as such as eternal progression, baptism for the dead, temple endowments, and the existence of a Mother in Heaven and the expanded picture of the universe that these beliefs give me. It troubles me when, for whatever reason, hesitate to talk about these unique beliefs. It seems to me that the hesitance we feel in talking about Heavenly Mother stems from



two sources:

first, a fear of the feminist implication of believing in a female deity; and second, a fear of criticism from mainstream Christians who do not believe in a Mother In Heaven and who already see us as weird and un-Christian. I'm all for injecting feminism into the bloodstream of the Church and for giving the finger to other 'Christian' churches who constantly harp on us, but that's not my main motivation for wanting to talk more about Heavenly Mother in church. I want to talk about Her because She's a part of my life. An analogy that has been useful to me in thinking about the role of Heavenly Mother should play in my life is comparing my relationship to Her with my relationship to the Savior. We are taught to develop a personal relationship with the Savior, to think about Him and His life (since we were young we were told to ask ourselves, "What would Jesus do in this situation?"), while we never actually pray to Him. While I would be more than happy to see a day when we could begin our prayers, "Dear Father and Mother in Heaven," I'm content for the time knowing that She's there and that She's listening. What I'm not content with is the notion that any mention at all of Her and the role She plays in our lives I heresy. I think we can develop healthy relationships with our Heavenly Mother just as we can

have personal relationships with the Savior, and I don't think the Church or BYU should be afraid if we want to do this. It troubles me that the church I love and believe in should be ruled by fear. It troubles me that the University that has taught me so much considers itself a "glass house." I pray that we can overcome this fear and reap the full blessings of knowing about our Mother in Heaven.

Ed Whitley

Dear *Student Review*,

I just took a break from cramming or my third midterm and noticed a copy of your paper on our living room floor. I didn't think that the *Review* was still being printed, naturally the sight of a recent edition amazed me. After flipping through the pages, agreeing with the top 20 bottom 10, mocking Brother Wade, and pondering the religion pages, I am convinced that SR is back. Your lack of ads/sponsors shocked me. Surely if the content of SR continues as such, many more students and student-types will become as attached as I once was. I was deeply moved by an article printed in 1991, something about "Mississippi," and have had deep respect for your staff and supporters since then.

I especially 'tip my hat' to D. Christian Lines and David Barber on their well-thought-out and timely pieces.

I wish to add that I am not, or at least I do not feel, rebellious, non-conformist, retro, ska-loving, apocate, vegetarian, intellectual, or 'clever'. I am, or try to be, simply, forgiving, just, and honest. Your audience is wider, perhaps, than you think. (My parents are the ones who dropped SR on my living room floor.)

With Sincere gratitude,  
The Dervish

P.S. My votes for top 20: Officer Wayne Beck, again, and 2nd hand corduroys; bottom 10: cheating girl-friends and too-small bike racks.

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7PM**

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coincide with Mickey,  
Minnie, Donald, Goofy,  
Daisy, or Pluto, despite that  
fact that we are the Disney  
Channel.



## ravings of a scottish madman

**F**ear. Raw, naked, pulsating fear. Actually, being naked is not something which I am afraid of; when I'm naked, people laugh because, hey, I'm a funny guy, right? There are many things which do, however, inspire me with almost as much dread as the prospect of never leaving Provo. Since this is Halloween (the time of year when the neighborhood psycho is given the opportunity to poison your children and Dennis Rodman blends) I will relive my terrifying experience of three nights ago. I had the most frightening dream since my nightmares when I was five and thought that my father was not joking when he told me that Christmas had been canceled (he really is a wacky guy; he kept that joke up for a month).

The dream starts in a reasonably unthreatening manner. As in most of my dreams, I am sitting around doing nothing hoping for an encounter with either Famke Jansson (the '62" Dutch model who played Miss Onatop in *Goldeneye*) or Parker Posey (oh, my). Apart from the small assortment of monkeys eating their own feet, this is not unlike my everyday life. For no apparent reason I seem to be shaving at a sink on a pier when a woman walks over and says, "Well, are you ready?" Since this woman is neither Famke nor Parker, there is a reason to be afraid, especially when suddenly I turn to see that a man dressed in a black robe is pronouncing us man and wife. I scream. The pier has collapsed and this leaves only two routes of escape, swimming (which is not an option since I am afraid of water due to a trauma I suffered as a small child - was savaged by a halibut), or escaping in the 747 that is slowly circling over the water with the door open.

Fortunately, at this point, Danny, one of my married friends, jumped on my bed to

wake me up and ask about something which I was too incoherent to care about, before cheerfully announcing that he was gone home to have sex with his wife. More fear. This brought the whole dream back to me, and I asked my roommate, Ian (the wise and righteous one who misses church least in our apartment) for his interpretation. After a few moments he gave his prophetic assessment that my dream meant, "seven years of bumper crops and seven years of famine." On later reflection, I thought that it might be something to do with the interesting cocktail of painkillers I had taken for my yearly flu, and of course my fear of flying, and Chinese country western music.

My recent fear of flying is largely due to my last flight back from Scotland. It isn't so much the flying that scares me as being on the plane. After a splendid meal of what I assume was chicken (I didn't know chickens had tails) I had to decide what to do for the next nine hours on board. It was at this point that the individual to my left (I had been ignoring the oldman on my right on who kept trying to show me photographs of his stomach operation) noticed I was wearing two T-shirts on my flight to Salt Lake City. Did I know that Brigham Young had eight bazillion wives and ate babies? Did I know that I was going to Hell? (How did he know I was going to Provo?) After a three minute evaluation of just how pointless this discussion would be and having no pencil with which to stab him through the temple, I sought escape in an in-flight movie. Some guy in the movie orders fish in a restaurant. Everyone else cheers and stands to sing the Finnish national anthem. I knew I should have gone with the Dutch airline. Uncle Ed was still waving his 1830 copy of the *Book of Mormon* and Uncle Fester was checking his scab.

The jet lag made sleep impossible, so I turned off the radio. A sterling selection was on offer. On 1: Dustin Hoffman discussing the sets of *Ishtar*. 2: Michael McLean and some other Mormon lounge singer bozo. . . together at last. 3: Covey on Covey. 4: Frank Sinatra sings classic *Iron Butterfly* songs ("in a gaaaaaada-la-ve-da honey don't you know that I love you, yes, that's right just you-oo. Put your teeth back in please, ma'am"). 5: The Finnish national anthem repeated every four minutes. 6: 101 useful recipes for cat. the other white meat. 7: Vagon poetry. 8: Donny and Marie sing with former ZZ Top band member, Merrill Bateman. 9: Today on the country station songs about trucks. 10: Michael Bolton sings gospel (I very nearly lost control of my bowels over this one). 11: Running commentary of the world Scrabble finals from 1978. 12: Tammy Wynette's greatest hits. as played by Dwayne Yoshimoto, world famous shamisen player.

As Mr. Yoshimoto began to sing I made a healthy decision to turn to the cat recipe channel, as Japanese men should never, under any circumstances, be allowed to sing, "Sometimes it's hard to be a woman." The dial was stuck. Panic. The volume control was nonexistent. Removing the headset was no longer an option as Uncle Fester had removed his stomach bandage and was looking for help to remove the scab. Cold, dark fear gripped me as I realized it was just me and Dwayne Yoshimoto for the next nine hours.

A man's nightmares may stem from many things: scab removal, marriage, any one of the Osmonds, Provo, and Chines country music, but as long as Alton Wade and the crusaders of light over in the ASB are here to keep us safe, all is well in Zion. Be afraid. Be very afraid.

by dave sneddon

## suggested covey leadership seminars

**I**n the last issue SR was able to reproduce Mr. Covey's priority list and confirm his association with the Spice Girls. With the aid of several psychic friends and the telescope originally purchased by one SRöstaffer's former roommate for the purpose of "research" into the observance of curfew in the dorms, SR can now publish further excerpts from the planner of the man who invented regularity. Under the heading of future projects, we found some planned Covey Leadership seminars for the future.

### Covey's Leadership Seminars for BYU Administrators

Win/Win Firings: A Woman and a Liberal  
Principle Centered Hirings: G.A.'s Kids  
The Seven Phrases of Highly Effective Spin Control  
First Things First: Get Noticed Then Become a G.A.  
Enforcing your Circle of Influence  
Synergize: Mixing up Ecclesiastical and Administrative Authority  
Shift your Paradigm or Go to Another University  
Effectively Collaborating Over How to Spend the "Lighting the Way" Money  
Correlation Meetings About What to Say We Spent the Money On  
Sharpen the Pencil

### Covey Leadership Seminars for Gang Youth

Principle-Centered Drive-By's  
The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Pimp Daddies  
Sharpen the Switchblade  
First Things First: Fly Rims and a Dope Sub  
Win/Win Shootouts: A New Paradigm  
Effectively Collaborating in Denny's Parking Lot  
Correlation Meetings  
Loitering Inside Your Circle of Influence  
Beating a Paradigm Shift Into Your Foe  
Synergize: Mixing Crystal Meth and Marijuana

"free"  
sleep  
Swamis  
Bouncing  
Utah Opera  
Halloweenie Parties  
eloping  
Random nudity  
Sunstone SR article  
haunted houses  
water bottles  
Twin Peaks  
Vivian, Neal  
Rick & Mike  
X-Files Premiere  
plastic  
wine bottles  
new staff  
Green River  
leg hair  
welfare  
service missions  
to Ecuador

TOP  
20

BOTTOM  
10

rectal prolapse  
Whitney Houston live  
The Boo  
Chinese Country Music  
questioned integrity  
deadlines  
hunter's orange  
daily shaving  
leg hair  
dead deer hanging  
from your  
neighbor's trees



# make over

by julie bowman

**M**y stomach growls. I know the families on First and Washington put their garbage out today. In the can I find potato peels, unwanted pieces of chicken, and a copy of Vogue dated April last year. I flip through the first few pages. Thin, prepubescent girls, flat-chested and made up like whores sit in groups with their legs open, sucking on their pointer fingers, staring out at me as if making a dare. And laughing. Munching potato peel, I think I could build a girl like that.

I stand in the forest, my stomach half full with chicken and peelings, and search for the marker. The one that comes to me in my dreams, branded permanently to my eyelids. Forty feet back and to my right, I spot two twigs, the thickness of pencils, tied with grapevine. The May apples bow to it like so many Chinese women nodding and bowing before tea. I sit. I do not nod, nor do I bow. I look at my fingernails, bitten, but cleaner now from drinking and washing in the river. I dig them into the earth. The moistness stains the tips brown. I load one finger with a thick clump and apply it to my cheek. One streak on each cheek, rising from the base of my nostril to the top of my ear, like the mark on a medicine man.

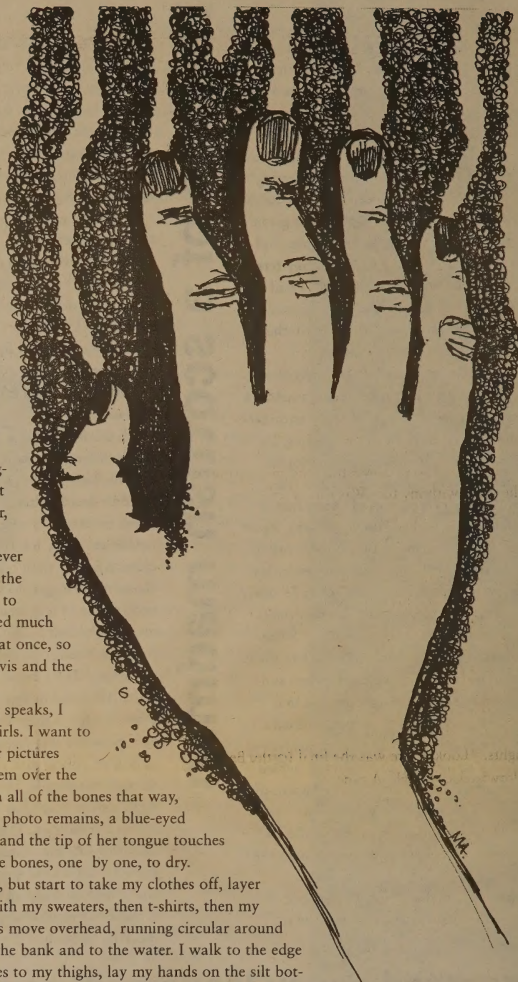
I start ripping up the may apples. They relinquish the dirt, no passionate clinging. I stop only when all their roots lay white on the earth, torn like a cut, painful, but not deep. I examine my hands, sticky with juice from the stems. I think about the river, about washing. The river lies. I know I am different. I will show it why.

I kneel at my homemade cross like a catholic. I do not know any prayers. I never liked red, so I never went to church. All the churches in town have red doors. I dig at the earth knowing they will be there, strong and bare, ready to be built on. They are easy to find in the dark earth because they are light, not white, just lighter. They have absorbed much of the moistness, much of the darkness, but I will wash them. I cannot carry them all at once, so I make several trips. I take the larger bones first. The skull. I choose carefully. The pelvis and the rib cage.

I carry those three and the Vogue back to the bridge. Ignoring what the water speaks, I lay the bones along the shallow edge and start looking through the magazine, at the girls. I want to make one with blue eyes. I tear out all the ones that do not have blue eyes. I fold their pictures carefully into paper boats the way my father taught me when I was twelve and sail them over the bones. And she will have brown hair. All the blondes go sailing over the bones. I wash all of the bones that way, laying them in the water and sailing photos over them. When I am finished, only one photo remains, a blue-eyed brunette modeling a see-through slip dress. Her nipples press against the pastel fabric and the tip of her tongue touches her upper lip. I fasten her image to the bank with four rocks. Below her picture lay the bones, one by one, to dry.

The river yells at me. I think it wants me to always be different. I say nothing, but start to take my clothes off, layer by layer. I fold each piece and stack them one on top of each other, starting the pile with my sweaters, then t-shirts, then my bra, next my pants, panties, finally my socks. I stand naked in the weather. The clouds move overhead, running circular around my nakedness. The shine of the sun comes from behind casting a long shadow down the bank and to the water. I walk to the edge where the water runs slow and wash my feet. I crouch down, pressing my bare nipples to my thighs, lay my hands on the silt bottom and clean the dirt from my finger tips, my cheeks. Clean and moist, I return to the bones. I look at the picture. From the pile of abandoned clothing, I pull my knife. The sunlight winks along the edge of it. And I begin.

I whittle down my left lip and fit it to the bone. Then, my right one. I hollow out each cheek and affix them to the small skull. I pare down my buttocks and place them. I use their leftovers to complete the breasts. I style the hair, letting one piece fall seductively down the left cheek. I form the lips into a pout. Satisfied, I go to the river. With cupped hands, I carry several handfuls of water to her. With the water and the sun, she will grow and graft together. Last of all I add the eyes. I imagine the clouds reflect there, swirling with the blue like a marble. The photo blows away in a gust of wind. I lay my own stripped bones down and fly off to catch the photo.



## ATTENTION ARTISTS Sundance "Young Contemporaries: Utah, 1997"

Sundance is to host the first "Young Contemporaries, Utah 1997" which is planned as a yearly event for the University and College Art Departments of Utah. The new Visual Arts Program at Sundance looks to make clear its commitment to community arts activities and education.

The show will include Graphics, Illustration, Fine Arts (Sculpture, Drawing, Painting and Print Making) and Photography in the exhibition. The three prizes that will be awarded are:

first prize \$500

second prize: \$300

third prize: dinner for two at the Foundry Grill, Sundance

Private view November 7 in the Rehearsal Hall at Sundance, exhibition closes November 9.

In the 1960's the "Young Contemporaries, London" was the focal point of the Art Student's year. The exhibition launched the careers of David Hockney, Ron Kitaj, Peter Phillips, Derek Boshier, and many more. It may be hoped that the vitality of student work will act as a centerpiece and gallery resource for Utah's thriving Arts Culture. Send your best and make this an exciting contemporary show.



## Appomatox Battleground Tour

by Whitney Fox

When our tour guide says, "This is American as apple pie," I am skeptical. She points to the grass heaving under corners where a steel monument grazes an ear of the sky. Sharing our D.A.R. heritage, we read the thin pamphlet and turn pages in synchronized time to a taped snare beating

like a thin heart beating.  
Maybe our own. We think of this as truly American—an afternoon of surplus time meets Brother Walt's *Leaves of Grass*.  
Do we read more between the battle lines where

historians have forced emotion? Where only a stone marks the place, men beat down other men in the hazy chiaroscuro of daguerrotypes. I read the pamphlet and only want ice cream. Now *this* is American. In my mind, I see women, memorials in the grass and wind whipping clotheslines. "Here," she points, "was a time

when days were measured in a sort of anti-time when women were slaves to weather and plundering soldiers, where—" I push the grass with my toe. Was this worth dying for? A man beating a woman was expected of an American  
I wonder for which: the man or the woman? and continue to read

the pamphlet that tells less the more I read.  
It's the Japanese tourists who've got it right this time— lambswool sweaters folded with tissue, all of America in a Bennetton bag. They press together with cameras where mothers and grandmothers once beat hooked rugs, concealed double-barreled guns. The grass still sweeps the floor of the sky. "This grass has seen it all," the tour guide reads my thoughts. "Look! Here was the final battle. Beating had its drawbacks, though. A time of mourning swept the country." Did pioneering women ask *Why? Is this where we have to go to reach America?*

This Virginian grass smells old for its time.  
I read the language of the rocks, where women beat cream into butter, crammed into the corners of America.

## A Sitting

Krista Halverson

It comes of asking the neighborhood girl to paint your portrait, who falls asleep behind the canvas—the sweet art student. You insist she go home; oil won't curl in on itself in one afternoon, try sending her out with a hard roll, a bowl of cold chocolate soup, and the speckled recipe book it came from. She can't leave until it is finished, you can have a little nap while she waits.  
So you try a thrifty sleep, gather oatmeal wrinkles on your left temple, but hear her tapping her fingernails on the front window like your sisters used to do on your bathroom door to bring you out. You sit another triplet of hours—can neither see nor hear her moving. She says she has done it, used up all her paint. You uncreak your smile, slap money in her hand, which she takes but stuffs in your mailbox.  
Are you stunned when you see it? A calico of tiny fruits on a white sky. She has painted your face on the head of a pin, the size of a thumbprint or one of her gala apples. But you see your scar over the eye, crescent-shaped and unremarkable. Hardly notice you are missing a periwinkle lampshade.

## On Perfection

by Eric Freeze

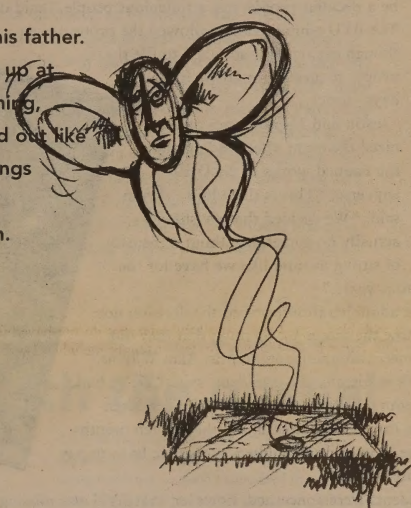
In church I was told that the second coming would absolve the world of all its ails;  
Four of us, sitting on orange plastic chairs, thinking how everyone would be healed, Brother Gordon jumping out of his wheelchair floating gradually upwards, Brian getting his kidney back— his sister took it a couple years ago.  
We would all be returned to our perfect state.

Mike had an operation on his ears.

His mother was embarrassed, didn't want him to be teased;

"Dumbo" like his father.

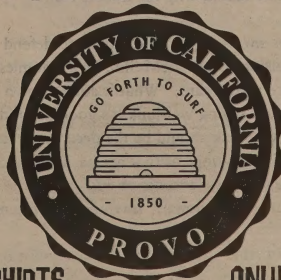
When he floats up at the second coming, his ears will fold out like naked bird's wings like Icarus  
Grazing the sun.



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# RODIN

## students protest Rodin rebuff

## Rodin removal shameful

by dave barber and jon hart

Last Thursday, more than two hundred BYU students gathered in front of the ASB to protest BYU's decision to exclude four famous works from a Rodin exhibit at the Museum of Art. Shouting "Don't ban Rodin," the protesters paraded placards in front of TV cameras. "We want to be a peculiar people, not a ridiculous people," said one protester. The BYU administration allowed the protest, even though organizers had failed to file the proper request form giving five days' notice.

Justin and Megan Jones organized the event after reading about the banned works in the *Daily Universe*. "This is ridiculous," Justin said. "We decided that we should actually do something about it instead of sitting around like we have for the last four years."

The administration justified the decision not to show the pieces by claiming that they did not meet community standards. Alan Wilkins, BYU's academic vice president, said, "We've had something like sixty thousand schoolchildren come through the museum in the last ten months. So we have multiple audiences that we have to pay attention to."

Students were concerned, however, that BYU was missing a chance to educate students and the local community by showing masterworks of world art. "The people here on campus and in this community will probably never have the chance to see sculptures like 'St. John the Baptist' and 'The Kiss' ever again in their lifetimes," Justin stated. "So why are those sculptures sitting in the basement of the Museum of Art where we can't see them?"

The administration's concern for the delicate sensibilities of the community apparently have not extended to the viewing of female frontal nudity. One student pointed out that "all of these pieces being taken out are of nude men, whereas we don't have qualms about the female body being nude. I don't understand, why the double standard?"

Other students showed up at the protest to defend the school's decision. Dave McMullin, an economics and food science major, said, "What it comes down to is, these people are saying we think it's good art and therefore what we think should be the decision of the university. The implications of that are basically unconstitutional." He did not elaborate on his definition of "unconstitutional," leaving many listeners puzzled.

When asked whether students should have input on matters like the content of the Rodin exhibit, another student, Greg Rockwood, said, "No, because we

The recent controversy over the Rodin exhibition in the *Daily Universe* has touched a sensitive cord in my intellect. In fact, I was quite outraged at several of the remarks made by the people that were directly

involved in the censorship of some of the most prestigious pieces of the collection. They made me blush with shame.

"Saint John the Baptist Preaching" has been removed because it portrays the prophet nude. I quote: "Gray said that the university did not want to portray a prophet of God in that manner." This kind of ignorance by scholars and Mormons, of the symbolism of nakedness in religious art, is disturbing. Nudity in religious classical art has a profound symbolic value, namely innocence, humility and total submission to God the Father. Mormons who go to the temple frequently or who simply read their scriptures should know about that. We learn from Moses 3:25 and Abraham 5:19 that Adam and Eve, in their innocence, and while obedient to all of the com-

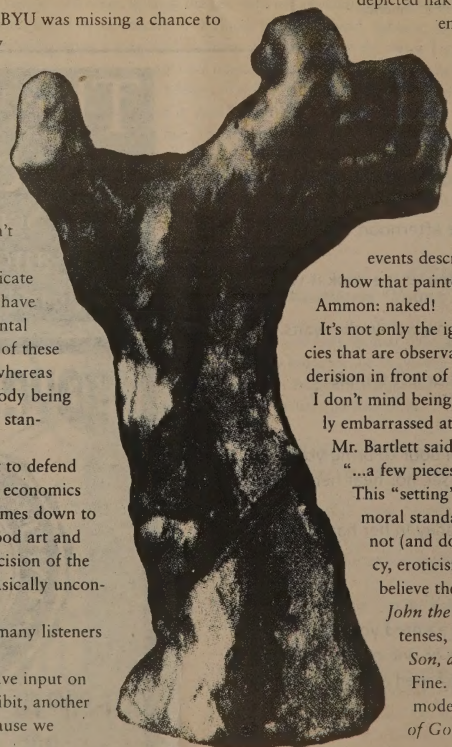
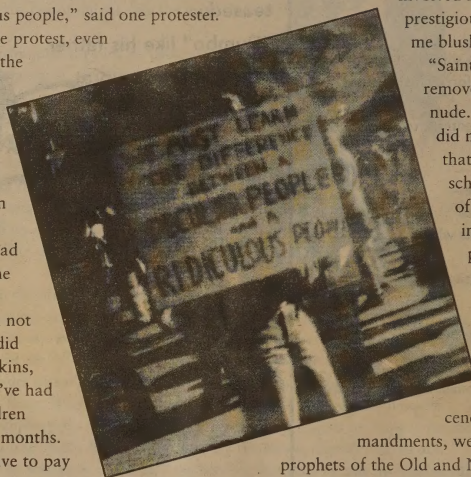
mandments, were not ashamed of their nakedness. Many prophets of the Old and New Testaments and many saints have been depicted naked in art, and have been regarded most rever-

ently by the worshipers: Adam and Eve, Isaiah, David, Christ as a babe, or being baptized, or being removed from the cross, Mary Magdalene, John the Baptist, Saint Sebastian, Saint Jerome, to name but a few. Often this is done symbolically; often it is done because the scriptures make direct reference to it. (See Isaiah 20:2-3.) If a painter from the 18th century in possession of a *Book of Mormon*, had been charged to make a painting of the events described in Alma 20:28-9, there is no doubt as to how that painter would have represented the brothers of Ammon: naked!

It's not only the ignorance that bothers me, but the incongruities that are observable in this matter. They make BYU a subject of derision in front of both the artistic world and the national media. I don't mind being laughed at because of my beliefs, but I am really embarrassed at being pointed at because of inconsistencies.

Mr. Bartlett said the reason for the censorship was, I quote: "...a few pieces that would be problematic in our setting."

This "setting" would have to be interpreted as the high moral standards of this university, a university which cannot (and don't get me wrong, should not) accept indecency, eroticism and pornography on its property. We have to believe therefore that setting aside the censoring of *Saint John the Baptist Preaching* under pseudo-religious pretenses, the three other statues (*The Kiss*, *The Prodigal Son*, and *Balzac*) were condemned for these reasons. Fine. But if a naked couple, sitting and kissing in a modest position is removed, they why is *The Hand of God* kept? It symbolizes the Creation and depicts



by jean-luc sansfaute



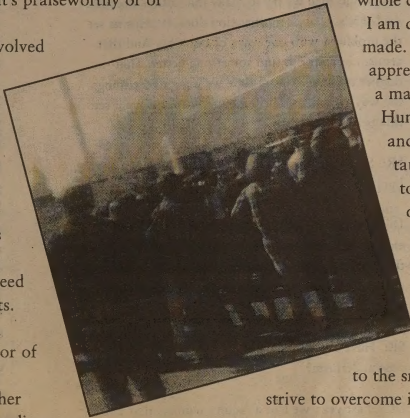
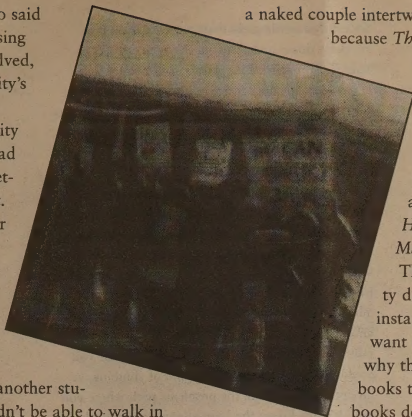
come to this institution as it is.” Rockwood also said that protesting is never a valid means of expressing student opinion. “I don’t know the factors involved, but I have to say, yeah, I agree with the university’s decision.”

Lee Bartlett, assistant vice president of university communications, said that the administration had offered to “accommodate fifty people” at a meeting about the issue in order to avoid the protest. But according to Megan Jones, “they offered for two or three of us to go, not all of us.” Justin said, “We just wanted to get the administration’s attention and show that there are a lot of students who do care about this. We pay our tithing, we pay our tuition. Why is it that we can’t be a part of the decision making?”

“This shows a lack of trust,” said Paul Rose, another student. “The administration thinks that we shouldn’t be able to walk in and see it and decide for ourselves whether it’s praiseworthy or of good report.”

When asked whether any students were involved in the decision not to show the four sculptures, Wilkins said, “We took student point of view and faculty point of view into account but we haven’t gone out and asked for a vote.” There was no official student or faculty committee involved in the decision.

Bartlett suggested that students send letters to the editor and e-mail to administrators to express their views. Wilkins and Bartlett agreed to set up meetings with all interested students. Bartlett can be reached by e-mail at llbartlett@ucs.byu.edu. Cambell Gray, director of the Museum of Art, can be reached at cbgray@byu.edu. The e-mail addresses of other administrators are available in the CougarNet directory.



a naked couple intertwined in the most intimate manner! Is it because *The Hand of God* doesn’t show any male frontal nudity? Intriguingly enough, it is only the statues showing anatomically correct men that have been removed. In fact, only one male nude is allowed in the exhibition, and guess what, he has no genitalia. Nevertheless, the university doesn’t seem to care so much about showing female frontal nudity, as in *The Hand of God*, *She Who Once Was the Helmet-Maker’s Beautiful Wife*, and several other torsos.

The regular education provided by the university doesn’t match the action taken in this particular instance, yet another inconsistency. If we really want to protect the chastity of the student’s eyes, why then does the library hold a plethora of art books that depict nudity? Why then does it contain books dealing with sexology or perversion, as in the whole collection of the Marquis de Sade’s literature? I am deeply frustrated by the decision the university has made. There is so much to be learned and so much to be appreciated in all fine art, and especially in the work of a master such as Rodin. Many students in the Humanities have been exposed to nude classical art and in particular to Rodin and *The Kiss*. If it is taught and valued in class on slides and in photographs, why then should we deprive our students of the privilege of seeing the real thing? Not many of us are fortunate enough to travel to Paris or to other big cities which sponsor these kinds of exhibits. There certainly are and certainly always will be people in Utah Valley who will be offended by works such as these four censored sculptures. However, we should not cater to the smallness of their perspectives, rather we should strive to overcome it.

# reconciling postmodernism with the gospel

The emergence of postmodernism has caused many to re-examine the very nature of traditional knowledge. Philosophers such as Derrida, De Man, and Levinas took a scientifically modernist point of view and folded it inward on itself. Essentially, they subverted traditional ideas of everything. Even in the field of science, physicist Thomas Kuhn wrote “The Structure of Scientific Revolutions”, a book with a very postmodern outlook which pointed out flaws in the very notion of objective truth in science. This school of thought has found its way into other academic fields as well—history, the humanities, law, and, most controversially, in theology. Postmodernism raises questions on the nature of interpretation that many aren’t sure how to consider. This is especially problematic with religious philosophy, which traditionally relies on universal truths. So should we dismiss applying postmodernism in theology altogether, pigeon-holing it as some strange philosophy that shouldn’t be touched? Could a postmodern analysis of the scriptures, for example, send our view of the world spinning into chaos and disorder? Dr. David Cowles, a professor in the English department, offers some interesting answers to these questions.

SR: Why do you think postmodernism has become an issue for students, particularly here at BYU?

DC: It has a potential to draw people away from the gospel. It also has potential to draw people toward the gospel like most ideas do. In the hands of a person without faith, it can destroy faith; on the other hand so can virtually any other discipline—so can science. Some people suggest that in the humanities we have a tougher time with ethical issues because the nature of our disciplines invite doubt and question in ways that other disciplines

## an interview with David Cowles

don’t. I disagree with that. I think that if you’re in one of the more trade-oriented majors like law or business you could learn to be a Zezzrom; you could learn to be materialistic. If you’re in the sciences you could learn to be an atheist by not seeing the hand of the creator. That’s true of postmodernism or poststructuralism as well, it can be and has been used in ways that I don’t approve of. On the other hand, there are things about it that can help us with our faith, and it depends on how you use it.

SR: How would you define post-modernism?

DC: Deconstruction, the method of poststructuralism or postmodernism that I’m most interested in, will show that we think in systems. What we really desire is the actual things themselves in the world, which Derrida, the person who really developed the idea of deconstruction, calls “presence”—we want presence; we want those actual things. But if I want to talk about President Bateman and he’s not in the room, then I have to re-present him, make him present again, with some kind of a symbol or word and a concept that goes along with it. That concept will never be the President Bateman; moreover, when you and I think of it, when we hear the term President Bateman, our experience with President Bateman will be different, so we won’t actually understand it the same way. Still these systems are the closest thing we have for getting at presence. Derrida would say that we could never actually arrive at the presence of the actual thing, we can only see it mediated through our interpretive systems and the concepts that allow us to symbolize the world as we come to understand it and construct it.

Deconstruction and other kinds of post-modernism show that, even taken on their own terms, all these systems ultimately break down.

They do that in several ways. One is that we depend on oppositions. Our thinking, at least in western cultures, is always structured by oppositions like good and evil, male and female, faith and doubt—and these kinds of oppositions, when you look at them, always break down. That is if you really look at them carefully, you find that each side of the opposition has inherent in it aspects of the other that are inseparable from it.

Another way that we find that our conceptual systems break down is we show that at the center of each is an idea that Derrida calls a “transcendental signified.” Sometimes it’s referred to as a center on which the whole system is based. In a religious system, that might be one’s concept of God. That concept of God is how, if it’s accurate, everything else in the system would make sense—as it relates to that concept. Derrida would always show that those things that supposedly ground us, those centers that supposedly ground the whole system are ultimately part of the system itself, and that you can’t ever show that they are somehow connected to that presence anymore than those things of the system.

The other way we show that our systems break down is by showing that in the very act of asserting the basic theses of our ways of seeing (in our conceptual systems), we find we violate those theses in the very act of making them. And at the center of all our most basic ideas is ultimately a kind of paradox. It differs with each statement, each thesis, each system. But that seems to be universal. At least we can always show it.

SR: So where does that leave us? If everything breaks down and shuffles us into a sea of uncertainty, what contribution does postmodernism give to humanity?

DC: This is the reason for instruction and

by Tom Johnson



postmodernism seem so threatening to so many people—because if our ways of seeing, if our ways of determining of what is true are essentially unreliable, then where does that leave us? Where does that leave faith? (In fact, I think faith is where that leaves us.) Where does that leave our beliefs? Where does that leave the system of the gospel, for example? And I can understand how people could be concerned about that.

I see it differently. It seems to me that deconstruction and other forms of postmodernism never deny that absolute truth is out there. What they question is our ability to recognize it unmediated by our conceptual systems and to know whether our systems provide us an accurate window on that truth.

I believe God understands absolute truth in an absolute way. In fact he describes himself as omnipresent—he says all things are present to him (D&C 128:24). The problems for which we have developed language—the fact that we can't have the actual presence of those things or concepts or ideas—God doesn't seem to have. I don't think he has to look at things mediated through systems. This is my interpretation obviously and I would never preach this as gospel. But I understand that God has presence; he doesn't need those systems. He sees and has some intimate connection with ultimate truth and absolute truth that is really unavailable to us here, which is one of the reasons why God keeps saying things like, "My ways are not your ways," "My thoughts are not your thoughts." And the reason I think that he keeps telling us that "I speak unto men according to their language," is that he is speaking to our conceptual systems. He keeps telling us, "I'm going to put this into your own language so you can understand." But the implication is always that "I see things in a much better way. I'm just trying to frame it so that you can get it." That's because we are, after all, infants in the understanding in comparison with God. Our systems are ways to help us make sense of the world, and they do—they're good—but they also limit the ways that we can make sense of it. And what postmodernism helps us to do is look at those systems and see, in part, the ways that they don't work, some of their weaknesses.

SR: So would you say that postmodernism helps us toward a better system, possibly the way God's system is?

DC: I think ultimately that's what it does. By breaking down and showing the gaps in our systems, postmodernism creates a kind of space; it clears some ground. It doesn't tell you what to put in that space, it clears some ground. Now what you put in that space is hopefully something new and better. It could be a space that's made for revelation, for example. And I think our experiences with revelation really fit in with this in some nice ways. We clear a space, we ask a question, we say here's something we don't get and something gets put in there. Now it may be that, at a later time, is subject to deconstruction too. Some of the deconstructionists talk of a clearing space, putting something in it, and then deconstructing that, and then clearing another space, like an abyss because you just keep falling and falling and falling. To me it seems you could just as easily see it as a kind of climbing, as an opportunity to see the problems with where you are. It's like Ether: the Lord shows us our weaknesses and then we try to make that into a strength. And that's what deconstruction does. It helps us see the problems with our ways of thinking. And that arouses us to try to find something better. That doesn't mean that every time we'll get to see things the way God does, but hopefully it means we'll see things in a better way.

SR: So one of the products of postmodernism is a humility about ourselves and what we know?

DC: I think so, ideally. We've probably all seen examples of postmodernists who do not exhibit that, but that seems to me to be an absurdity. If there's anything that postmodernism should teach us, it's humility about our ways of seeing.

SR: Have any of the other disciplines dealt with postmodernism?

DC: Last year, we had a faculty seminar that met weekly for two semesters in which we talked about postmodernism. We had different people from different academic fields speak on how it applied to that field. It was a fascinating discussion that was approved by our administration and occasionally attended by members of the administration. That doesn't mean that they agreed with everything we said—which is not something anyone would expect.

SR: What were the general feelings of the religion faculty? Receptive? Hostile?

DC: I think most people that didn't understand it came to learn; I think we all came to learn. I think with a field like this, most people, if you asked, would say that they are not experts but students. I certainly feel that way—I'm not an expert, I'm a student. I'm trying to learn. I'm trying to understand.

There's a view that some people at the university take that we should look at our academic discipline in the light of the gospel and not the gospel in the light of an academic discipline. Of course that's an opposition and it breaks down in some ways. It seems to me that certainly our academic disciplines and deconstruction and postmodernism offer us perspectives that we don't take in the same category of truth that we take gospel truth. And we should always look at those disciplines certainly from the light of the gospel. On the other hand, it seems to me that those disciplines also help us. Part of the point of BYU is to try to bring them together in interesting ways, always remembering that some things we know, some things are theory, and some things are ideas that help us. If you're studying ancient Near Eastern history then yes, you should always look at it in light of the gospel. But your studies are always going to help you understand aspects of the gospel better. It seems to me that's true of any philosophy or idea or field. And that doesn't mean that you go around preaching it and that you decide that you've got the ultimate truth because your discipline teaches you something, but it should give you insights into the gospel, as well as the ways the gospel should help you understand the discipline.

SR: Do you have anything else you'd like to say about postmodernism?

DC: I guess to me it's important to see postmodernism as an interesting way of looking at things, that can help you understand the world in new and valuable ways, just as other philosophies and other ways of seeing and all our academic disciplines are. And it's not that it's the secret to the universe, but like all good ideas, it's something that can expand our ways of seeing, which is what a university is all about. And that to me is what it is used for, to help us see in new ways.

# we have gays in the church—good people

In an interview conducted by the San Francisco Chronicle last April, President Gordon B. Hinckley claimed, "We have gays in the Church. Good people. We take no action against such people—provided they don't become involved in transgression, sexual transgression." When asked how the Church deals with homosexuality, considering the strong family teachings that exist, Hinckley replied that celibacy is an option for Church members and cited, "A lot of people live a celibate lifestyle. Lots of them. A third of the people in the United States are now single. Many live a celibate lifestyle" (San Francisco Chronicle, April 13, 1997 issue).

These statements may come as a surprise to many Church members who did not know exactly how the Church views homosexuals from the standpoint of membership. However, these statements are encouraging many LDS gays and lesbians to feel more comfortable about their sexual orientation and speak more openly about it without fearing reproach. Last November, a group of BYU students and one faculty advisor approached BYUSA with the intent to begin a club and initiate dialogue with the administration in order to specifically address gay and lesbian issues on campus. The organization, under the name Open Forum, has continued to meet frequently since that time as a club and with the administration. Sam Clayton, one of the charter members of Open Forum, spent some time with me discussing some of the issues that they are currently involved with.

SR: Why did you choose to call your organization Open Forum?

SC: Well, because we were a group of individuals, students and faculty, that were not just gay and lesbian people—we didn't want to have an organization of just gay and lesbian individuals—we weren't trying to start a gay club...but we wanted to establish a forum for people, regardless of their sexual orientation, to participate in discussion about issues surrounding homosexuality. So we have people in our group with all different backgrounds. We have one student who is heterosexual who was raised by her mother who is a lesbian. Our faculty advisor, Dr. Paul Thomas, and his wife, are the parents of a gay son. We have other people that are heterosexual that are just concerned about these types of issues. We also have gay and lesbian people. We established Open Forum as a forum that could deal with gay issues.

SR: So what prompted you to first approach the administration with the proposal to establish Open Forum?

SC: Well, there was a larger number of people that were beginning to be more open and honest to people about their sexuality. And we began to realize that there was a high level of intolerance, a high level of misunderstanding, of miscommunication surrounding the status of gays and lesbians at the university and in the Church. So we wanted to open a dialogue with the administration so that we could discuss this and hopefully get it more widely known on campus that gays and lesbians are, in fact, welcome at our school, as long as they live by the Honor Code.

by jonathan hart

Very initially, what got us talking about our orientation was the article by Dallin H. Oaks in the October 1995 issue of the Ensign on same-sex attraction. His article clearly distinguished between sexual orientation and homosexual sexual behavior and stated that those people who are homosexual in their orientation are welcome in the Church without any disciplinary action, providing they live by the law of chastity. We felt like that same attitude and policy was the same at BYU and we wanted people to know about it. So we approached the administration.

SR: I know that you've already touched on this a little bit, but what were the objectives for Open Forum outlined in your charter?

SC: Well, we submitted a club charter to the BYUSA office and also directly to Vice President Alton Wade, who's in charge of Student Life. And our objectives outlined in that document, basically there were two objectives, were to increase education and overall awareness about this issue so that we could decrease the intolerance and just get a discussion going. Our second goal was to publicize the fact that gays and lesbians were welcome at the university.

SR: So what has the public's response, then, been to Open Forum?

SC: Well, I don't know if people know about Open Forum. Mostly we've worked with the administration. I think that most people have heard that there are gays and lesbians here and that there's some



type of an organization that works with the administration. But the number one objective was to get it out in the open that there were gay and lesbian Mormons, and gay and lesbian people here at BYU. So we've been partially successful with that. The response has been mixed, it's been very mixed. I'd say it's been more positive than negative.

SR: How has the administration responded to your presence here?

SC: Our initial meeting with Alton Wade went very well. He was very open to us, very non-threatening. He felt that our concerns were valid. He felt that it was an important issue on campus that needed to be addressed. He had spoken with President Bateman and they both felt that our objectives were worthy of consideration and that they needed to be met. So he delegated us to Dean of Students, Janet Charmin, and we began meeting with her to work on ways and different avenues to take in order to accomplish our goals.

SR: In what ways have these goals been accomplished?

SC: Mostly what we've done is help Dean Charmin and people in the administration understand what the experience of gay and lesbian people is like here and make them more aware of the situation. They've welcomed that.

One of our most successful endeavors happened back last March, when the Daily Universe ran a series of articles dealing with gays and lesbians on campus. Specifically, it covered a research project, a survey we conducted which gauged and measured attitudes concerning gay and lesbian issues at BYU.

Perhaps most significantly, the articles contained statements from the administration that made it very clear that anyone, regardless of their sexual orientation, is welcome at the university if they comply to the school's standards. It also contained statements from gay and lesbian students and members of Open Forum who were able to talk about homosexuality openly and discuss how issues surrounding homosexuals were important, not just to gays and lesbians, but to all of us... These articles generated some awareness. And that's what we wanted.

Personally, I was a bit tired of being in classroom situations and hearing people talk about gays and lesbians as if we did not exist here, as if there was no such thing as a gay Mormon, as if there was no possibility that there was a gay student sitting in the classroom with them. And I think these articles and statements by the administration let people know that we do exist here at BYU and that that wasn't a bad thing. The administration's public statements ensured gays and lesbians of their status on campus. It also helped people, not only to feel like they could be more honest in social settings, but also to encourage people to be more considerate and aware.

SR: So it's been the public sanction from the administration and the Church that have helped gays and lesbians feel like they can be more open about their sexuality?

SC: Well yes, it's done a lot. Basically what had happened in the past is that because there is no defined way for anyone to acknowledge their orientation without feeling like they're in danger, people have simply lied or kept that truth about themselves secret. They've gone on living their lives as if they were heterosexually oriented. With the statements from the administration, and more importantly with the recent comments by Gordon Hinckley in the San Francisco Chronicle, which acknowledge that gay people are good people, that they're welcome in the Church, that there is no action taken against them simply based on their orientation, more and more people are being honest. And on the surface that may look like we [in the Church] are having more of a problem with homosexuality, but what is really taking place is that people now feel like they can be honest and can be so without endangering their status in the Church.

SR: How do you see the role of Open Forum developing here at BYU, providing that there's this dialogue now with the administration that's been going on, and these articles have been published? What kind of problems still exist here and what

kind of goals are you working toward currently?

SC: The status of Open Forum is presently a little disorganized since our faculty advisor, Dr. Thomas is on sabbatical this semester at Oxford.

As far as the problems we are still facing, many people are still unaware of us. A big concern is that there is no formal participation by gays and lesbians in the university processes. We still don't have a BYUSA sponsored club, so there's no formal organization that ensures that gay and lesbian issues will be addressed in the future. So that's a concern.

I think that the administration is sympathetic to our situation. But I think that they're in a tough position. What is the best way to proceed with this issue? I mean, it's not going to go away. Do you have a BYUSA organization that deals with homosexuality? Do you allow gay and lesbian students to be delegates on the Student Advisory Council? What's the best way to go about representing the gay and lesbian community at BYU? That's a difficult position for the administration to define without compromising or misrepresenting themselves.

SR: How do you feel that people here understand gay and lesbian people and gay and lesbian issues at BYU? What is it like for you to be a gay student here?

SC: At BYU I've hardly experienced any hostile discrimination. I've had a couple of anonymous notes on my car or anonymous mail and people being pretty aggressive verbally. But it's more that people don't understand the concept of orientation. I think that most people think that homosexual tendencies or orientation are a disorder, or something that's temporary or something that can be cured or changed or fixed. And that's something that we all hear a lot—that it's something that can be overcome. In actuality, the experience of the overwhelming majority of gay and lesbian oriented individuals is that their orientation is fixed—that no amount of therapy, no amount of faith, no amount of righteousness has changed their sexual, romantic orientation. Typically, someone who is gay or lesbian stays that way for the rest of their life. I think that's uncomfortable for us in our church community because we have these teachings about families and heterosexual marriage. Where do we fit in? We don't know how to fit that in. We don't know how to fit someone who doesn't have those desires to be married to someone of the opposite sex into our doctrines. And I think that this sense that a gay Mormon has about their future, that lack of hope that they can truly be a part of the community, that they have a place within the Mormon plan of salvation, is what prompts a lot of gay Mormons to leave the Church and to struggle with their self-esteem and depression...

The demographics of the Church are changing and more single parents and single people in general or people who are simply different in some way are becoming a part of the Church. The Church is wrestling to find a place for these people. And the Church is clearly making an attempt to welcome gay and lesbian people as well. The advice given to gays and lesbians by Church leaders is to remain celibate, which I think is an acknowledgment that the Church realizes that, at least for a large percentage of gays and lesbians, their orientation is not something that is temporary or fluid or easily changed.

SR: I know we've been focusing on gay issues on a larger Church scale, but I'd like to go back to your particular situation here at BYU. It seems there have been some important statements made by the administration that indicate that gays and lesbians are welcome at the university providing they live by the Honor Code. But why is it that Open Forum has not yet been acknowledged as a BYUSA sponsored club and been endorsed by the administration?

SC: I think that there is some hesitancy from the part of the administration about going forward with any formalized gay representation on campus. There are some concerns that it would lead to pressuring the public or the Church to change Church policies. I think that's a pretty common concern—that we're an advocacy group that's trying to change the official Church policy on homosexuality.

SC: So Open Forum isn't interested in changing policies?

SC: It isn't a lobby group. We're not trying to change the Church's position on homosexuality. What we're trying to do is ensure that the current policies are understood by the public and implemented here at BYU. And the current Church policy is that as long as a person isn't engaged in sexual misconduct they are accepted in the Church in full fellowship. And I think that especially President Hinckley [in the San Francisco Chronicle] has taken a real, aggressive stand in trying to be inclusive and defining a role for gay people in the Church. He's gone to great lengths to establish a definition of a gay Mormon, where previously people thought of these as incompatible opposites. This possibility of a "gay Mormon" has let a lot of gays and lesbians feel that they can be a part of the Church.

SR: Back to the school, what has been most significant to Open Forum thus far, and how do you see Open Forum's role developing at BYU?

SC: Well, I feel like there's been a real healthy dialogue with the administration. I think a great many people have had to confront uncomfortable prejudices. It has helped and helps gays and lesbians feel welcome here. We feel like the administration and the student body want to address the gay issue. I think that especially Dean Charmin has gone out of her way to try and understand the situation and is very concerned, very cautious, but very concerned about doing the right thing.

One of the things that we learned from our survey last year was that there was a lot of miscommunication regarding the Church's policy toward gays. We found that 91% of the respondents reported that they were familiar with the policy and then when presented with a multiple choice question listing possible policies, only 33% of that number chose the correct answer. 41% believed that the LDS Church welcomed gays as long as they changed to a heterosexual orientation. 10% believed that the Church excommunicated homosexuals regardless of their sexual behavior. Because of the stigma surrounding this issue we wanted to show that people don't talk about it. And consequently, there are some widespread misunderstandings here...

Also in our survey we found that 13% of the students know someone at BYU who is gay or lesbian and that 12% of the students have a gay or lesbian family member. This is an issue that affects a significant percentage of the community. And whether or not someone is gay or lesbian, or has a gay family member or friend, or someone who just wants to understand more about these kinds of issues, everyone can help. All we encourage people to do is be honest.

More information regarding Open Forum can be obtained by contacting Dean of Students, Janet Charmin, Professor Paul Thomas (who will return from a sabbatical this December) or by contacting Sam Clayton himself. Sam can be reached at 356-8194 or by e-mail at [mohobhouse@aol.com](mailto:mohobhouse@aol.com).

**HAVE AN OPINION  
JOIN  
STUDENT REVIEW  
MEETINGS:  
WEDNESDAYS  
MAMA'S CAFE  
7PM**



Several months ago I was driving to Logan with my family to spend some time with them. My four-year-old sister was sitting in a car seat next to my fiancé, and my family was talking about my dad's recent call to be bishop of our ward. Suddenly my sister said to me, full of enthusiasm, "You have to obey Daddy because he's the bishop, and now you have to obey Joel because he is going to be your husband." I was shocked! As Joel explained to my sister that I never had to obey him, I began to wonder. Why should I have to obey my husband? Why should I have to obey anyone just because of his or her title? Should I obey anyone? Why is obedience even an issue?

The first figure that comes to mind when most of us think of obedience is God—especially if as Mormons we claim that our first allegiance is to God and Jesus Christ. Doctrine and Covenants 14:7 states, "And, if you keep my commandments and endure to the end you shall have eternal life, which gift is the great gift of all the gifts of God." Most of us claim to be seeking eternal life, and to receive it we must know God and Jesus Christ; we must become more like them. We have commandments that show us how to do this, so it's simple. All we have to do is obey.

There is, however, another part to becoming like God. In Doctrine and Covenants we read, "I the Lord God, make you free, therefore ye are free indeed; and the law also maketh you free" (98:8). We are free to choose. Indeed, it seems that to return to our Father we must choose, for Satan was cast out for proposing that we be forced to return. To become like God, we must grow. And if the purpose of life is growth, we should not be so terrified of making mistakes, for without mistakes, how can we grow.

At this point we arrive at a paradox. In order to be like God and achieve eternal life, we must exercise our agency. It is clear that agency is very important to God. Yet we also read that to return we must obey all of God's commandments. How can we choose and grow if we have to obey?

Although I believe that fundamental truth rests on paradox, this one can be at least partially resolved by recognizing several things. First of all, God is not coercive. There is no temporal punishment (only physical, natural consequences) for disobedience. Lehi teaches, "And the way is prepared from the fall of man, and salvation is free" (2 Nephi 2:4). God gives us commandments because he loves us, but he will not force us to obey them. We are only invited to obey. 2 Nephi 2:27 reads: "Wherefore men are free according to the flesh; and all things are given unto them which are expedient unto man. And they are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil."

We have seen that we cannot obey without exercising our agency, but now the situation becomes even more complicated. How do we know what to do? In order to grow and become more like God we must exercise our agency, and a necessary part of growth is making mistakes. In Moses we read of Adam and Eve using their agency to disobey God, to eat the fruit of the forbidden tree. Yet their sin was necessary for the completion of the plan of happiness. On one level they sinned, and on another level their agency enabled us to use our agency. True, they

## following God's plan:

disobeyed God, but that disobedience was a learning experience that ultimately allowed them (and all of us) to return to God—yet another paradox. We should choose to obey the commandments of God, but what are the commandments of God? We are to exercise our agency, but to what extent? Who is justified to speak in lieu of God?

The scriptures (D&C 84:45, Moroni 7:16) explain that every person is born with the light of Christ, and that all good things are a reflection of this light. Moroni, through his father Mormon, teaches: "For behold, my brethren, it is given unto you to judge, that ye may know good from evil; and the way to judge is plain, that ye may know good from evil; and the way to judge is plain; that ye may know with a perfect knowledge, as the daylight is from the dark night" (Moroni 7:15). And 2 Nephi 32:3 reads, "Angels speak by the power of the Holy Ghost; wherefore, they speak the words of Christ.

Wherefore, I say unto you, feast upon the words

## obedience vs agency

of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do."

Every person has the light of Christ, and according to this light we are responsible for judging. We know through the Spirit of Christ and the words of Christ what we should do. But what, exactly, are the words of Christ? Few of us have Christ appearing to us telling us what to do directly. Can anyone speak for Christ? The process of getting scripture from God to us is filled with uncertainty. Communication must go from Christ to a prophet—a fallible human being with subjective experience—to words, a medium which is, at best, ambiguous. Then these words are abridged and translated. Even with nearly perfect translation, some of the meaning will be lost. Then we read scriptures and come up with our own interpretations. The correlation between what Christ originally meant and how we interpret it will not be one hundred percent.

One of the peculiarities of the Mormon religion is that we believe in an open canon; we believe that God still speaks to people. In Doctrine and Covenants we learn that, in reference to those ordained to the priesthood whose mission is appointed: "Whosoever they shall speak when moved upon by the Holy Ghost shall be scripture, shall be the will of the Lord, shall be the mind of the Lord, shall be the word of the Lord, shall be the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation" (68:4).

When moved upon by the Holy Ghost, any of us can speak the words of Christ. Obviously, we are not required to obey everything people tell us to do. But what about priesthood leaders or those above us in the chain of command? Their words do not require obedience for the same reasons that we cannot suppose scripture should automatically be completely obeyed. First, someone must be moved upon by the Holy Ghost for us to consider his/her words scripture. Second, as we are responsible for judging and choosing according to the light of Christ within us, we must know they are being moved upon by the Holy Ghost. The words of Christ given to priesthood leaders, general authorities, or any other person must still travel through a person with subjective experience, to words, and to me, another person with subjective experience. Are

they really words of Christ spoken to me—directions and commandments for my life? Are the interpretations of other people God's interpretation of scripture, or merely an opinion which may or may not be suitable for me.

Moroni invites each of us to ask, to question the validity of things contained within the scriptures. And we can each have a personal witness through the Holy Ghost. Continuing in Moroni we read, "And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things" (Moroni 10:5). All things: we may know the truth of the prophets, of the scriptures, of Christ, of our bishop's counsel. 2 Nephi 32:5 states, "If ye will enter in by the way, and receive the Holy Ghost, it will show unto you all things what ye should do." It's clear we are invited to test the truth of all revelation by appealing to personal revelation, to the Holy Ghost, and to God. In D&C 6:23 we read, "What greater witness can you have than from God?"

Last week I sat in Relief Society and listened

by ray hill

to my stake president talking about counsel of the prophets and the commandment not to watch R-rated movies. Over and over he stated, "It's not a matter of judgment; it's a matter of obedience." A speaker in sacrament meeting stated, referring to the Honor Code, "It's not a matter of agency; it's a matter of honor." I cried inside because this is a perversion of both the gospel I need and the unconditional love of Christ. Everything is a matter of judgment. Everything is a matter of agency. It is our duty to judge for ourselves what course of action is right. Truth is truth, and "the Spirit of truth is of God" (D&C 93:26). If it is truly God's command that I never watch R-rated movies, then he will manifest that to me by the power of the Holy Ghost if I ask. If the Honor Code is truly God's will, then he will let me know if I ask "with a sincere heart, having real intent" (Moroni 10:4).

I am responsible for my actions, for my decisions. I am shown the way to judge. I have the light of Christ. But I can only know imperfectly, and I am not always sure what I am doing is right. All I can do is trust in the unconditional love of my Savior. "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part, but then shall I know even as I also am known" (1 Corinthians 13:12).

### E-mail forum

The religion page is looking for wacky strange-but-true tales from BYU religion classes.

Write up whatever quotes, questionable doctrines, and Mormon folklore you've heard from professors and students, then e-mail it to us:

studentreview@juno.com



# seven years in line for tibet

There are worse things than Julia Roberts not getting the guy. Worse even than Chris O'Donnell playing Ernie Hemingway, or Keanu Reeves in well, you pick the movie. The worst of the worst: Brad Pitt doing a Nazi accent. Whoops, we mean Austrian. You'd think Pitt was so sure of his stardom that he wouldn't bother doing an accent at all (recall if you dare Kevin Costner's decidedly un-British turn as Robin Hood, Prince of Anti-Accents). "Ingrid, eet's de Hee-mah-lye-ahs!" he says to his wife before dumping her at an Austrian train station. Egad, it's only his third line. Help us, please! Someone help us! Or, as our friend Brad said so appropriately himself, "Shoot ahp!"

Seven Years in Tibet is better titled Seven Minutes in Tibet, since it takes Austrian mountain climber Heinrich Harrer (Pitt) so long to actually get into Tibet, and for that while (the whole first half of the film) he's extremely unlikable. In just the first two minutes, we learn that he would rather spend four months in the Hee-mah-lye-ahs than stick

around for the birth of his kid.

After World War II breaks out, Harrer and his climbing team are stuck in a British POW camp in India. Harrer is bitter towards his companions; he prepares himself for his foreshadowed encounters with the Dalai Lama through random acts of harsh self-punishment, throwing himself on barbed wire fences and failing miserably at several humiliating escape attempts. This film taught us something we never quite understood before: how very much Brad Pitt likes to bleed. He bleeds on the fences on the floors on himself and, even though you feel desperately sorry for Harrer, you still don't like him! Harrer does eventually make it to Tibet, though the seven years declared so proudly in the title are pounded into the space of only an hour, focusing on Harrer's patriarchal friendship with the boyhood Dalai Lama, played with disarming intensity by 14-year-old Jamyang Nang Chuck.

Produced and directed by Frenchman Jean-Jacques Annaud (The Island of Dr. Moreau), Seven Years does offer enticing glimpses into

Tibetan lifestyle but not enough to completely satisfy. While Harrer is living happily in the holy city of Lhasa, the Chinese government, now reorganized by the communist regime, is planning on reconfiguring Mother China, and those plans include defenseless Tibet. The Tibetans, looking like a rusty gang of retired Huns, fail to make much of a stand against the People's Army, and you know Tibetan independence is a lost cause.

Seven Years' most affecting moments are those shared by the softened Harrer and the young Dalai Lama, and it's a shame there aren't more of them. Annaud draws unavoidable connections between Harrer's tutoring of the Dalai Lama and his broken relationship with his own son back in Austria. The film's emphasis on Tibetan non-violence seems noble at first but quickly degenerates into sniveling sentimentality. Don't get us wrong, it's a very pretty film. The cinematography is pleasing, if unoriginal. To quote another critic, it's "a macho version of The Sound of Music" (thankfully, Pitt does not burst into spontaneous song). Overall, Pitt's acting ain't too shabby; he makes you want to rush out and "Climb Every Mountain."

by clive staples and joy

# God bless Tony Roma's


As I walked out the glass doors of Tony Roma's Restaurant, I felt like placing my hand over my heart. Not because of any sort of heart-failure due to the overindulgence of meaty foods, but due to the atmosphere the restaurant was able to capture: American. What exactly is an American atmosphere? Well, let's just say it's the same atmosphere that presides over those family Forth of July barbecues on the back porch. Those where Dad is focused intently on the ribs roasting on an oversized grill as the old radio belts out tunes over the dimly lit lawn. Just replace Dad and Mom with the Tony Roma's staff, and there you have it: "a place for ribs."

I'll admit, I didn't go to eat at Tony Roma's strictly for the atmosphere. What pulled me into this famous ribs restaurant was the banner flapping outside announcing the "All-you-care-to-eat-rib slab" for only \$14.95. The all-you-care-to-eat deal is exactly what it says. To start out the grand feast, the options of various soups or salads are available along with some of the best bread and garlic butter I've had this side of the Mississippi. The bread was actually warm and soft, which thrilled me beyond compare, and I am not thrilled easily. I opted for the Carolina Honeys as my main dish; Dick chose the Bountiful Beef slab; Jim partook of the Red Hots. We shared a rack of the Blue Smokies, thus making the full spectrum of Tony Roma's ribs known to us. I'm normally not much of a meat man due to the tendency of cooks to overcook and serve dry flesh, but this meat meal was different. The ribs were some of the juiciest and most flavorful these teeth have had the pleasure to tear apart. We literally tossed our forks and knives aside to greedily devour our ribs like royalty of the Medieval Ages. We unanimously declared that the Red Hots live up to their ferocious name, and we agreed the other ribs all wound up in the winner category. Even the french fries beat all others when dipped in the Tony Roma's original barbecue sauce which came along with our meal.

I wondered, however, how I would fare at this restaurant with a member of the opposite sex sitting by my side. How can I comfortably make small chat while I attempt to scrape off every last morsel of meat on my plate without picking up the bone? So for those attempting to impress that special first date at a nice restaurant, those who haven't quite mastered

etiquette skills, be sure to practice up at home before taking that special someone to Tony Roma's. Maybe you could just stand outside and inhale the fragrant aroma of barbecuing ribs if you don't have much confidence in your ability to keep that tuxedo completely clean. But for those that have mastered such skills and know your date shares a voracious appetite for good ribs, Tony Roma's just might be the thing that brings you together. How sweet it is.

by daniel potter

<b>november 1997</b>			
<b>5</b>  <b>BRIAN NEAL QUARTET (JAZZ)</b> <b>8PM \$2</b>	<b>6</b> <b>UNLUCKY BOYS &amp; OPTIMUS PRIME</b> <b>9PM \$3</b>	<b>7</b> <b>CHUMP NUMBS, WOODEYE, &amp; TGAMD</b> <b>8PM \$4</b>	<b>8</b> <b>HIP-HOP BAZAR W/ FURTHER MORE</b> <b>8PM \$4</b>
<b>10</b> <b>CLOSED</b>	<b>11</b> <b>SWEET THE LEG JOHNNY W/ TBA</b> <b>8PM \$3</b>	<b>12</b> <b>MARVINS GARDEN, RYE COALITION PORTER ROCKWELL</b> <b>8PM \$5</b>	<b>13</b> <b>GARDEN WEASELS W/ SKA GUESTS</b> <b>8PM \$5</b>
<b>14</b> <b>GATHERING OSIRIS &amp; PIPER DOWN</b> <b>9PM \$3</b>	<b>15</b> <b>ROMER, ELSEWHERE, ZHANDRA, OPTIMUS PRIME, SEARCHING FOR REALITY</b> <b>8PM \$4</b>	<b>17</b> <b>RED BENNIES &amp; WAXDADDY</b> <b>9PM \$2</b>	<b>18</b> <b>OPEN STUDENT FILM FESTIVAL</b> <b>7PM \$1</b>
<b>19</b> <b>SCOFFLAWS, MY MAN FRIDAY &amp; INSATIABLE</b> <b>8PM \$5</b>	<b>20</b> <b>UNSOUND MENACE, 9 SPINE STICKLE-BACK, &amp; ZHANDRA</b> <b>8PM \$3</b>	<b>21</b> <b>AGNES POETRY, TRANS-ATLANTIC CRUSH, MEMORY GARDEN</b> <b>7PM \$6</b>	<b>22</b> <b>INSIPID BROWN &amp; TBA</b> <b>8PM \$4</b>
<b>24</b> <b>FEARLESS RECORDS: CHUCK, &amp; UNSOUND MENACE</b> <b>8PM \$3</b>	<b>25</b> <b>LIME 6 &amp; WALLY</b> <b>9PM \$3</b>	<b>26</b> <b>CLOSED</b>	<b>27</b> <b>CLOSED</b>
<b>28</b> <b>CANNIBAL BUFFET &amp; TBA</b> <b>9PM \$4</b>	<b>29</b> <b>MIGHTY MAHOGANY &amp; TBA</b> <b>9PM \$4</b>	<b>at Wrapsody</b>	

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